



The American Patriot

Published by the Association of Retired Members of the U.S. Armed Forces in Belgium (ARMAF-B)

HOBBY BOMAR TAKES REINS AS PRESIDENT Succeeds Hank Reed

Hank Reed announced his resignation as President during a brief business meeting at ARMAF-B's fall luncheon, held in Brussels in conjunction with the 80th ASG's Annual Retiree Day, last September. Hank now lives most of the year in the US, and felt it was improper to continue as an absentee officer. He pointed out that Vice President Hobby Bomar had led ARMAF-B with distinction as acting President since April 2003, and urged his selection.

After a brief discussion, during which many other members joined Hank in praising Hobby's contributions and agreed that he was next in the line of succession (as First Vice President), Hank asked for a vote on the proposition that Hobby succeed him as President until the next regular election of officers. This was moved and seconded from the floor, and approved unanimously by all present.

Hank plans to spend a few months each year in Belgium, and hopes to remain active in ARMAF-B. He is currently serving as the Editor of The American Patriot.

**IT IS TIME TO RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN
ARMAF-B FOR 2005, AND
TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS
TO JOIN US!**

**If you haven't already done
so, please transfer €35 annual
dues to our ARMAF-B account:**

310-0108127-58

80TH ASG ORGANIZES SUCCESSFUL "RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY" AT NATO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

The 80th ASG hosted their Annual Retiree Appreciation Day activities at the NATO Support Activity in Brussels for the first time last September. This welcome initiative facilitated attendance of the many retirees in the Brussels and Schinnen areas.

The featured presentations, organized by Retirement Services Officer Marie Johnson and President of the 80th ASG Retiree Council Chuck Westpheling (who also serves ARMAF-B as our Treasurer), were especially valuable this year.

The highlight of the morning was a briefing by a very knowledgeable representative from the Veterans Administration who stressed that military retirees -- although veterans too -- are often unaware of the important services which Federal and State VAs provide for all veterans. The VA's web site, www.va.gov, is a good place to start. Retirees should also check their home state VA web sites, since each state has their own programs.

Another important briefing was given by LTC Jon Davis, the NSA Commander, who spoke on behalf of ASG Commander Quinn, who was away on mission. Colonel Davis' talk focused on the impact of plans to re-station many of the remaining forces in Europe on the support structure in the 80th ASG's area. While he could not give any guarantees, he noted that the supported population in the NATO & SHAPE areas was growing, and opined that military support in this area would remain robust well into the foreseeable future.

After the formal presentations, ARMAF-B organized an enjoyable luncheon which included a number of new members.

If you haven't attended "Retiree Day" activities, you should try and plan it into your schedule next fall!

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

In accordance with its tradition, at the end of the 2003-2004 academic year, ARMAF-B awarded two \$500.00 scholarships, one each to graduates of the Brussels American School (BAS) and the SHAPE American High School (SAHS). ARMAF-B uses this program to recognize and reward outstanding students as well as to encourage them toward continued education.

While the SAHS recipient is chosen by the school Scholarship Committee, in Brussels an ARMAF-B committee headed by Scholarship Project Officer Bill Bergman selects the winner from nominees recommended by the school.

This year's winner at BAS was Martin Dukoski, the son of a Rumanian officer assigned to NATO. It is the second time since we more tightly defined the eligibility rules, that the winner was a dependent child from a NATO Partnership For Peace (PFP) country.

Our rules, debated and adopted by our general membership, require the candidate to be the child of a military parent, with concrete plans for further education. We specifically do not take into account the parents' nationality. Beyond our awards, we have seen a good number of SHAPE and BAS PFP students return to Kiev, Budapest, and elsewhere not only imbued with that particular blend of American scholarship, citizenship, and athletic education, but with a check in their pockets to help defray the increasing cost of getting a degree.

**(Continued, as "ARMAF-B
Scholarships" on page 2)**

JOHN GREEN LEADS FALL EXCURSION TO YPRES

On 16 October, 30 members and guests joined us for a rewarding and informative day in Ypres, the most-visited battlefields and memorial site of World War I. The day began with a morning visit to the innovative and impressive museum called "In Flanders Fields." Opened in 1998, the museum traces the history of this site in a compelling way, identifying each visitor with one Allied or German soldier or adult or child civilian, and viewing events thereafter from the perspective of that person. The museum explains the battles of the Ypres Salient using interactive terminals, miscellaneous documents and photographs, film extracts and recordings, including John McCrae's famous poem "In Flanders Field." By identifying visitors with a particular person, the museum pays particular attention to the experiences of ordinary people, thus even more clearly evoking the horror of trench warfare and the strains of everyday life behind the front.

Leaving the museum, we enjoyed a substantial Flemish lunch in a nearby hotel before meeting our guide for the afternoon, an active duty Belgian NCO recommended by the tourist office. He seemed to particularly appreciate our group because of its familiarity with events of World War I. Afternoon highlights included visits to the German military cemetery, the aid station where John McCrae was stationed, and the Tyne Cot Military Cemetery, which is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world, with 11, 856 tombstones and the names of 35,000 missing soldiers inscribed on a semicircular wall.

Many participants expressed their appreciation to our excellent guide and thanked ARMAF-B and John Greene in particular for the fine organization of the day's events, which all agreed were impressive and well worth the trip.

ORPHANS.... OR NOT? (Essential Reading)

Each year, as a part of the 80th ASG Orphanage Christmas program, ARMAF-B buys Christmas gifts for approximately 15 children in the Ath area.

It works like this: At the end of November each year, the children (sometimes with the assistance of the staff) make up a "wish list" of a gift (and an alternate) they would very much like to receive under this program. The list is then given to the 80th ASG Public Affairs Office, and ARMAF-B, as one of the participants in the program, is notified.

Maree Schlickerrieder is our Project Officer on this program.

She (and those who want to assist) reviews the list and chooses as many children/gifts as our annually-budgeted €250.00 can support. She then undertakes to find these gifts in the PX or local stores, gift-wraps and delivers them in time for the annual 80th ASG Orphan Christmas Party at Chievres Air Base.

We always speak of these children simply as orphans, but there is actually something special about the category of children in the homes we support.

To clarify their status, please note the Belgian government operates all the facilities we refer to as orphanages. Some of the tenants are exactly that, "orphans", in the US sense of the word. However, those in the three homes we support are not. The children in these three homes have at least one living parent. But for a variety of reasons, they are not able to live at home.

Perhaps the parents cannot or will not take care of them, or perhaps the courts have decided that the children cannot safely be left in their homes – whatever the reason, the children come under the care of the government. And, if the parent makes contact with the child in any form during the year -- telephone, letter, visit -- that child is not eligible for adoption.

A radical change in the parental situation could permit return of the child to its natural home, but this is unfortunately uncommon. The children then stay in the home until they reach their eighteenth birthday, at which time they are required by law to leave the home. They become eligible for a small welfare payment which permits them to rent a room and buy food.

Because this is true, you see a sharp change in the "wish list" items for older children: they no longer ask for personal items but rather request things that will help them live on their own: comforters, coats, cookware, for example.

ARMAF-B tries to select the children it will buy for each year on the basis of three criteria: fairly equal numbers from each home, a balance of boys and girls, and a spread of ages. Obviously, we do not do as much as our hearts would have us do each year, but within budgetary restraints which are unavoidable, we do all we can.

With this more detailed explanation, we hope you better understand our objectives in this program. Each of you is welcome to attend the Annual Christmas Party and share in the joy!

Why join ARMAF-B?

- Protect Retiree Privileges
- Serve Our Communities
 - Scholarships,
 - Orphans,
 - Assist Fellow Retirees and Spouses
- Make New Friends for social activities and networking
- Enjoy great programs and events

ARMAF-B

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE US ARMED FORCES IN BELGIUM (ARMAF-B)

E Wing Box 500, US MSN NATO
Autoroute de Zaventem 1110
Bruxelles

ARMAF-B is a fraternal and social organization, authorized by the 80th Area Support Group, which is open to all active and retired members of the US Armed Forces and their spouses (including widows and widowers) in the Benelux. **All ranks and services are welcome** to join. Dues are € 35 per year.

Association Officers

President: Hobby Bomar
065-22.85.39
hobby.bomar@skynet.be

President Emeritus: Chuck Wilson
02-358.6153
c.l.wilson@skynet.be

Mons VP: Open

Brussels VP: Bill Bergman
0496-593870
wkbergman@hotmail.com

Brussels Asst VP: Alan Phillips
02-645.3633
Aphillips@escocorp.com

Treasurer: Chuck Westpheling
010/81.03.45
charles.westpheling@usa.net

Secretary: John Boyd
02/759.8503
John.KimBoyd@pandora.be

American Patriot

The American Patriot is a periodic newsletter published by ARMAF-B for its members in approximately February, May and October each year.

Editor: Hank Reed
02-734.3354 or USA (912) 234-3374
Hank_Reed2@CompuServe.com

ARMAF-B SCHOLARSHIPS

(Continued from Page 1)

Many see this as a continuation of the generous spirit displayed in the Marshall Plan.

Martin Dukoski was a popular choice, as evidenced by the enthusiastic response the ARMAF-B announcement received! We require first of all that our winner show excellence in academics. A second criterion is to contribute to the quality of life in the community by showing leadership in class activities and the many opportunities an American high school typically offers. Model NATO and Model UN, among others, show young people the importance of participating in international forums while teaching how democracy can work at supra-national level.

Willingness to 'bust heads' with peers on the field or on the court also counts. What was remarkable about Martin is that, among other sports, he excelled in football, making All Conference. American football with its stop-go action and highly specialized skills and complicated rules is a game non-Americans understand about as well as most of us understand cricket. Martin had never known this sport before he arrived in Brussels. For a boy coming from a soccer playing country to excel at the ritualised conflict Americans call "football" is an achievement that shows how hard Martin worked at fitting into a strange environment. And imagine having to learn English from scratch at the same time! This was, however, not the deciding factor – BAS presented a solid half-dozen scholar-athletes who had earned laurels and showed aptitude for doing very well in the future. In Martin's case, his 4.00 grade-point average placed him a full tenth of a point ahead of the pack, on a scoreboard where differences normally run in the hundredths. That we were looking at kids with 'the right stuff' was borne out by the fact that our other candidates whom we were not able to select did very well at the awards and scholarship ceremony.

As mentioned, SAHS has organized its scholarship program differently from BAS: it runs a fund-raising program with contributors ranging from the SHAPE Officers Association to the Parent Teacher Organization, the National Honor Society, the Protestant church, and local businesses, as well as ARMAF-B. Students also contribute time, effort, and fund-raising activity. The overall total can come to as much as much as \$30,000! The Selection Committee then uses a rigorous process of qualifying and selecting recipients and makes awards in amounts varying from \$500 to one top award of \$4,500.

As usual, during the ceremony, the Selection Committee chairman specifically thanked ARMAF-B for its contribution. Once more, ARMAF-B funds well used! We thank our members whose dues alone make these awards possible.

ARMAF-B BOARD MEETINGS

ARMAF-B Board Meetings are called by the President approximately every two or three months to organize future events and consider matters of interest to the members. These meetings, usually held at the Nivelles-Sud Motel to facilitate attendance by members in both the Mons and Brussels areas, are open to any member with an issue to present or willing to work as a volunteer to advance the objectives of the Association. If you are interested in attending a Board Meeting, or have a topic that you would like to see on the Board Agenda, please contact President Hobby Bomar.

The following is a summary of key points from recent Board Meetings

January 2004: Bill Bergman was appointed to audit the Association's accounts, and plans for the January dinner at the NATO Staff Center were finalized.

**Continued as "ARMAF-B Board"
On Page 4**

ARMAF-B BOARD **(Continued from page 3)**

Maree Schlickerrieder reported on the successful Orphanage Gift Project the previous December. Plans to encourage the attendance of widows at future events, including offering car pool rides, and future articles for the American Patriot, were also discussed.

August 2004: Bill Bergman presented the results of his audit, which confirmed that the Association's Funds were properly accounted for and disbursed in accordance with decisions of the Board. Hank Reed explained his desire to resign as President, in view of his frequent absences, and Hobby Bomar agreed to assume the office, subject to the agreement of the membership at the next meeting, until the next regular election of officers. Hank Reed agreed to represent the Association at the NSA Information Fair in early September, and organize an ARMAF-B Luncheon in conjunction with the 80th ASG's Retiree Appreciation Day later in September.

November 2004: Treasurer Chuck Westpheling reported improvement in the Associations financial condition thanks to increasing membership and a new life member. Alan Phillips agreed to organize a dinner meeting at the Belgian Prince Albert Club early in the New Year. Maree Schlickerrieder agreed to continue to lead the Christmas Orphanage Gift Project and reported the orphans wish lists were on the way. Inputs for the next edition of the American Patriot were discussed, and Hank Reed's willingness to edit it was noted. It was suggested that we contact non-retiree veterans in the area to advise them of Retiree Appreciation Day presentations of interest to them. The success of recent ARMAF-B visits to Eben Emael and Ypres was noted, and the possibility of future visits to the Canadian Museum (between Ghent and Ypres) and Maginot Line forts was discussed.

OBITUARIES

The American Patriot wishes to publish obituaries of our members and their families whenever this is appropriate. ARMAF-B members who wish to have obituaries included may submit them to the Editor by e-mail.

Dr. John Tehupeiry Bergman

Dr John Tehupeiry Bergman, who died at the VA Medical Center in St Cloud, MN on 7 May 2004 at the age of 93, was born half a world away on the exotic island of Bangka. His father, Willem Karel T. was physician to the Dutch Bangka Tin Co. It was his father's first position on graduating from the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands) Medical School as a General Practitioner. Later he specialized in Ophthalmology, a specialty John attained in 1952, also at his father's alma mater.

His mother was Maartje Ommering whose dowry from her father's herring fleet fortune still funds a scholarship for natives from the Spice Islands (now Indonesia's sub-archipelago of Ambon and the Moluccan Islands) to graduate study in the Netherlands.

John followed in his father's footsteps in caring for the poor, and fought Nazi and Communist aggression on two continents. Just before the German invasion of the Netherlands, John was married while the Dutch Army was being mobilized. A 1940 front-page story and photos feature him leading a column of returning Dutch POWs. His medical team examined the soldiers, consigning to ambulances those too weak to march back across the border.

To fight the German occupiers, Dr Bergman joined the Netherlands resistance movement. Assigned to a Regional Tuberculosis Testing Center, he was in a position to falsify the medical records of young men who would otherwise have been sent to certain death in German slave labor camps. The Dutch Resistance credits him with saving more than 10,000 young men from this fate. His two co-workers were executed against the wall outside their building on Victory Europe Day, 8 May 1945. Dr Bergman happened to be at home delivering his third child, Victoria.

After the war, Dr Bergman was asked to join the UN Relief & Rehabilitation Administration. He cared for the refugees and freed slave laborers from the occupied countries in the French and American Occupation Zones of Germany, prior to their repatriation to mostly Poland, as well as Czechoslovakia, Holland, and France.

In 1949 he was invited to join a team of doctors on contract to the recently independent Republic of Indonesia. They were to teach at the new Medical University, be consulting physicians to the new Defense Forces and to large private companies, like Standard Oil and GE; and to practice privately.

Returning to Europe in 1955 the family found a difficult situation. The housing shortage due to German and Allied bombings, and overcrowding from repatriating Netherlands from newly independent colonies caused the Holland actively to promote emigration. The Bergmans left for California in 1956, where the US Army found Dr Bergman ready to answer the call for physicians prior to the Cuban Crisis. He served in or commanded hospitals in Texas, New Jersey, Virginia, at West Point, and in Germany. At his specific request, he served in Vietnam as hospital commander. After this second military service he accepted a civil service position in Fargo, ND, from which he retired in the mid '80's. His ashes will find a resting place at Arlington National Cemetery.

He is survived by his daughters Jitske Bergman Smith, of Port St Lucie, FL and Victoria Bergman Lane, of Brick, NJ; his son LtCol (ret) William Karl Bergman, serving with NATO in Belgium and four grandchildren: Ingrid Jacoba Smith and Sybren Daniel Smith, Lt (USCG) Alexander W.K. Bergman, and Eric Bergman.

ARMAF-B
Association of Retired Members
U.S. Armed Forces Belgium

Application for Membership
(See also reverse side)

Date _____

Regular _____ Associate _____

NAME _____ NICKNAME _____
Last First MI

SPOUSE'S NAME _____ NICKNAME _____

RETIRED STATUS: SERVICE _____ RANK _____
RETIREMENT DATE _____ ACTIVE _____
or
YEARS SERVICE _____ RESERVE _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____ TELEPHONE _____

WORK ADDRESS: _____ TELEPHONE _____

APO ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Which address should ARMAF-B use for mailings (APO saves postage costs)? _____

If you have E-mail, may ARMAF-B send you mailings via E-mail? _____

May information above be published in ARMAF-B Roster for members only? _____

Indicate interest in serving on following standing committees:

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| Member assistance | _____ | Awards/scholarship | _____ |
| Membership | _____ | Publicity | _____ |
| Estate planning | _____ | | |

Additional data for Membership Committee consideration/information:

How long have you lived in Belgium? _____
How much longer do you anticipate staying in Belgium? _____
Primary reason(s) for residing in Belgium? _____
Family members residing with you? _____
Field of military expertise (e.g., finance, C3, personnel) _____
Current work expertise (e.g., sales, C3, management) _____
Major interests (sports, leisure) _____
Other (special concerns) _____

ARMAF-B member sponsor _____

Signature

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

REGULAR: Persons residing in Belgium who are

- a. Retired members of US Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard
- b. Widows/widowers of active or retired members of US forces
- c. Active duty members of US forces with more than 18 years service creditable toward military retirement.

ASSOCIATE: Persons who would otherwise qualify for regular membership but

- a. Do not reside in Belgium, or
- b. Although resident in Belgium and having completed 20 or more years service creditable toward military retirement from the reserves of US forces, have not yet reached retirement age of 60.

HONORARY: By invitation

MEMBERSHIP DUES

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Annual dues | € 35.00 |
| Member joining Apr-Jun | € 25.50 |
| Member joining Jul-Sep | € 17.00 |
| Member joining Oct-Dec | € 8.50 |

Unmarried widows are excused from payment of dues.

Optional lifetime membership: single payment according to following age schedule:

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Age 60 or younger | € 300 |
| Age 61-69 | € 300 less € 15 per year over age 60 |
| Age 70 or older | € 150 |

HOW TO JOIN

1. Send completed membership application (on reverse) to ARMAF-B Treasurer:

Charles Westpheling
ARMAF-B
PSC 71, Box 223
APO AE 09714

or

Charles Westpheling
ARMAF-B
Rue des Beaux Prés 16
1370 Mélin

2. Cash payment or arrange bank transfer of dues payable to ARMAF-B bank account (account number 310-0108127-58)
3. Applicants will be informed by ARMAF-B President of acceptance. Interim attendance at ARMAF-B meetings/activities is invited and encouraged.

SFC James De Gruttola USA Retired An American Patriot

Non-Commissioned Officer – WW II Veteran – ARMAF-B Member

SFC James De Gruttola, U.S. Army Retired -- ARMAF-B's last known veteran of World War II -- passed away in Brussels after a short illness on December 22, 2004. After services featuring full military honors at Sainte Anne Church in Koekelberg, James was cremated on December 28 in Brussels. He was 87.

James' family has arranged for donations in his memory to be collected by Army Emergency Relief, 200 Stovall St, Alexandria, VA 22332-0600.

James De Gruttola was born on December 1, 1917, in New York City's Bronx. Drafted into the Army at the beginning of World War II, he soon found himself in Britain, training and preparing to participate in the coming Allied Invasion of Europe. Despite the dangers ahead, James found that he enjoyed the challenges of Army life.

On June 6, 1944, D-Day, James landed on Utah Beach in Normandy and contributed his best efforts to the success of the American Forces on that long historic day. He subsequently fought all across Europe, and was there in the Battle of the Bulge when the Germans' last great thrust was finally stopped near Bastogne.

In the course of these epic events, James met and fell in love with a Belgian girl from Leige. After the war, he helped with the repatriation of our vehicles and equipment in Germany until he was eventually sent home and demobilized.

Back in the Bronx, James worked hard and saved his money until he had enough to return to Belgium and marry the girl he loved. After their marriage, James re-enlisted in the Army and managed initially to be assigned to graves registration duties in Belgium. In 1953, after a tour in the US, he was assigned to the 65th Infantry Regiment in Korea as a member of the first group of non- Puerto Ricans to be integrated into that famed regiment.

After serving additional tours in the US and France, James retired from the Army in 1966. He had been living with his daughter, Mrs. Mary Hendrickx, in Brussels.

ARMAF-B's President Emeritus, MG Chuck Wilson -- who worked closely with James' daughter Mary and officials of the 80th Area Support Group to arrange for military honors at James' funeral -- commended the outstanding support which the NATO Support Activity and the 80th ASG provided for James' funeral. ARMAF-B greatly appreciates the contributions which LTC Jon Davis, LTC Joe Troxell, Retirement Services Officer Maria Johnson, NSA 1SGT Clarke Williams -- and especially all of the participating soldiers -- made to ensure appropriate honors for SFC James De Gruttola.

Some Final Words

- The President advises that the next meeting will be a dinner at the Club Reine Fabiola in Mons -- details will be announced soon!
- The Treasurer reports that we currently have € 6,225.95 on hand, and 41 paid members in 2004. Our goal is to increase that number substantially in 2005. **So please pay your 2005 dues now, and use the enclosed application form to recruit new members.** More members mean more community clout and more good works!
- The Editor hopes you enjoyed this edition of The American Patriot, and will consider it a benefit of your membership in ARMAF-B. Please call or e-mail the Editor at **Hank_Reed2@CompuServe.com** or **02-734-3353** with any suggestions, requests, or articles to submit for future editions.